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**Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)**

**Summary record of the 13th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 23 October 2003, at 3 p.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Loedel ..... (Uruguay)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

**Agenda item 82: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space** (*continued*) (A/58/20, A/58/174, A/C.4/58/L.7 and A/C.4/58/L.8)

1. **Mr. Fallouh** (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed his delegation's solidarity with the United States of America over the tragic accident of Space Shuttle Columbia and congratulated China on being the third nation to send an astronaut into space. He noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) to implement the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and welcomed the overall global trend to utilize outer space for humanitarian and development purposes, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries. His delegation remained concerned, however, at programmes to militarize outer space, and stressed that the peaceful use of outer space required a sincere commitment to the ongoing development of clear-cut rules and regulations to counter abuse and prevent an arms race in space. In that connection, he hailed efforts by some States to reduce expenditure on the militarization of space, instead channelling those resources into development, remote sensing, communications, crop surveillance, natural disaster control, environmental preservation and programmes to redress economic, environmental and health problems. The Syrian Arab Republic had established a remote sensing facility as an investment in its national scientific development.

2. The issues of space debris and preventing the collision of space objects, particularly those containing nuclear fuels, must be dealt with more seriously. States which had nuclear-powered satellites should be responsible for providing more complete information on their vehicles, including their structure and fuel, and on the safety measures they adopted.

3 In conclusion, his delegation would welcome the addition of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the membership of COPUOS.

4. **Mr. Takahashi** (Japan) said that, in the past year, the reliability of Japan's H-IIA launch vehicle had been further enhanced as a result of its fourth and fifth successful launchings, in December 2002 and March 2003 respectively. Technology transfer to private companies involving the H-IIA was now under way and was expected to enhance the launch vehicle's reliability, reduce its cost and contribute to the utilization of space by humankind. In May 2003, Japan had also successfully launched the engineering experimental satellite *Hayabusa*, using the M-V launch vehicle. *Hayabusa*, which meant "falcon", was programmed to approach the asteroid *Itokawa* (1998SF36) to collect sample material from the surface and return to Earth in 2007. Promoting international cooperation would be one of the most important tasks of the newly established Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, which merged three existing Japanese space organizations, the National Space Development Agency of Japan, the Institute of Space and Astronautical Science and the National Aerospace Laboratory of Japan.

5. Convinced that all humankind should benefit from space exploration, Japan was actively cooperating with other countries within the framework of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites. It was also promoting the Integrated Global Observing Strategy and had launched the Advanced Earth Observation Satellite II featuring five major sensors, including those developed by the United States of America and France. As for utilization of the space environment, Japan would contribute to the International Space Station (ISS) programme by developing an essential component, the Japanese Experimental Module known as "Kibo" or "hope". It was cooperating closely with participants in the ISS programme.

6. His delegation welcomed the increasing synergy among COPUOS, the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities in their efforts to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III. Japan had served as chair of the action team for recommendation 17 and, within that context, had carried out education and training activities in cooperation with other Member States and organizations. Japan would also be participating in the work of other action teams expected to provide input to the Working Group established to review the implementation of UNISPACE III recommendations. Japan's proposal with regard to Earth observation had been adopted by the Group of Eight at its Evian Summit and incorporated in its Action Plan. Japan would host the Tokyo Ministerial Conference in the second quarter of

2004 to develop a framework for implementing that proposal.

7. In conclusion, his delegation wished to congratulate China on the successful launching of *Shenzhou V* and the return of its "taikonaut" to Earth.

8. **Mr. Acuña** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and the associated States, Bolivia and Chile, extended congratulations to China on its successful launch of a manned spacecraft, and stressed the priority of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, for the benefit of all humankind, taking particular account of the needs of developing countries.

9. Continued efforts must be made to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III in the areas highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General, including the development of international space law. Cooperation must be encouraged in such fields as international scientific campaigns, the dissemination of satellite data, teaching and training assistance to third countries and the creation of institutional space capacities in such countries, in view of their importance to human development. MERCOSUR supported the inclusion of a new item entitled "Space and water" in the COPUOS agenda for its forty-seventh session, which would strengthen international cooperation in the exploitation and improved management of water resources. International cooperation would also help in introducing innovative applications in such areas as tele-education and telemedicine, increasing the participation of developing countries in the space sector and optimizing the use of their public resources.

10. MERCOSUR noted with satisfaction that COPUOS had expressed its unconditional support for the efforts of the working group to prepare a report to the General Assembly for the 2004 review of the implementation of the UNISPACE III recommendations. It attached particular importance to the recommendations on improving knowledge-sharing through the promotion of universal access to space-based communication services (recommendation 9), sustainable development (recommendation 11), innovative sources of financing (recommendation 32), and to preparations for the implementation of experimental projects on the basis of proposals by the various action teams.

11. MERCOSUR welcomed the progress reported in the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and was gratified that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications had selected priority fields of action, which were of great importance for developing countries. The activities of the Legal Subcommittee were also of great interest, particularly with regard to the benefits of existing outer space treaties for both space-faring and non-space-faring nations as well as the Subcommittee's proposed review of the activities of international organizations relating to space law. It would be very useful for COPUOS to contemplate elaborating a convention on remote sensing containing updated principles.

12. Efforts to establish regional cooperation and coordination mechanisms must be pursued. The regional body for cooperation and coordination in space matters established by the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, held in Cartagena de Indias in 2002, was viewed by Latin American and Caribbean countries as crucial to ensuring their active and systematic enjoyment of the benefits of space activities. In that connection, COPUOS had noted the desire of Member States in the Latin American and Caribbean region to institutionalize the Space Conference of the Americas, a key initiative for the development of space activity in the region.

13. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan) expressed his delegation's heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of the United States of America on the tragic loss of the Space Shuttle Columbia. He also wished to congratulate China on its successful launch of its first manned space vehicle, *Shenzhou V*.

14. The militarization of outer space must be avoided at all costs and, if possible, reversed. Despite arguments to the contrary, COPUOS was indeed competent to address that issue. His delegation was in favour of concluding a comprehensive convention to prevent an arms race in outer space and supported the draft document on possible elements for a future international legal agreement on averting the placement of weapons in outer space, elaborated by China and the Russian Federation at the Conference on Disarmament in 2002. Pakistan also agreed that the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space should be reviewed, particularly their safety and

risk reduction aspects. It welcomed the progress already achieved in that regard and again called for the use of the Basic Safety Standards development process of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in connection with those Principles. IAEA was the only body competent to deal with that issue.

15. He reiterated the importance of equitable access by all countries, particularly the developing countries, to the geostationary orbit. The divisive issue of States' rights in that regard was not the only one that deserved attention; it was equally vital to continue examining the orbit's legal and technical aspects. Pakistan supported the incorporation of the Principles Relating to the Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space in a more binding legal instrument and believed that easy and low-cost access to remote-sensing data for developing countries was particularly important. Expressing his delegation's support for the disaster management support initiatives of COPUOS, he said that since 1991, Pakistan's national space agency, the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission, had been operating the Pakistan Mission Control Centre and the Pakistan Local User Terminal for the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue. The Terminal served as a ground service provider for disaster management support and covered several countries in the vicinity of Pakistan as well as the Arabian Sea. His delegation was convinced that communication infrastructures for early warning systems could be set up in outer space.

16. All countries deserved to benefit from satellite-based data and teaching assistance and training in institutional capabilities. He therefore lamented the adverse impact of limited voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. Resources were needed not only for long-term and short-term training facilities for developing countries but also to implement the earlier recommendations of COPUOS in that regard. Lastly, he re-emphasized the need to increase developing countries' access to space technology and reduce the existing gap between rich and poor countries in that field.

17. **Mr. Kiandee** (Malaysia) congratulated China on its successful manned space mission and stressed the need for genuine commitment to the peaceful uses of outer space in order to ensure the continued well-being of humanity and protect the planet's environment and resources. He endorsed the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III (A/58/174); the implementation mechanism established by COPUOS had strengthened cooperation within the United Nations system and between it and intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies for the application of the benefits of space science and technology.

18. Greater efforts should be made to prevent the militarization of outer space, in particular by drawing up an international agreement to prevent an arms race in outer space and to prohibit the development of weapons in outer space. COPUOS could play an important role in that regard.

19. Malaysia had always supported efforts aimed at peaceful cooperation in outer space; the Malaysian National Space Agency was responsible for Malaysia's space programme, which included implementation of a national satellite programme and ratification of United Nations space treaties and conventions. Malaysia was also actively involved in regional cooperative endeavours through the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum and the Association of South-East Asian Nations. In the area of interregional cooperation, Malaysia and Greece were co-chairing the action team on improving knowledge-sharing through the promotion of universal access to space-based communication services.

20. With a view to contributing to the development of international space law and the preparation of international agreements on practical applications for the peaceful uses of space science and technology, in 2004 his Government would host a meeting of the working group of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law on the draft Space Protocol, which would provide the countries of the Asia-Pacific region with an opportunity to review that protocol.

21. His Government was concerned by the ecological and economic effects of biomass burning and forest fires, including in peat areas in South-East Asia; there was a need for comprehensive monitoring and intervention capability. His Government therefore proposed to establish a space-borne real-time autonomous forest fire, peat fire and haze detection and monitoring system which would meet Malaysian requirements and also address regional forest fire and haze problems. Such a system would greatly improve the response time in emergency situations.

22. The rapid growth in the communications, entertainment and information industries had led to a growth in demand for satellite capacity in the region. A new optical satellite capable of 2.5 metres resolution, called RazakSAT, would be launched in 2005 and future satellites would expand regional coverage and serve as back-up to existing satellites. The new network would have an expansive footprint over Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region and would also have high-powered switchable spot beams over other regions in Asia.

23. His Government was also seeking to bridge the digital divide by means of the multimedia supercorridor project whose flagship programmes of tele-health and tele-education would take advantage of space technology. He invited suitable partners in the region to cooperate with his Government in developing technology transfer, science missions and training programmes in space-related education and industries.

24. **Mr. Ri Song Chol** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) congratulated China on the successful launch of its first manned spacecraft and said that outer space was the common property of humankind and should therefore be explored and exploited for the well-being of all humankind. There could be no monopoly on outer space and all countries had the right to participate in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. The rights of developing countries must be respected.

25. His Government expressed concern at steps towards increased militarization of outer space, such as the use of reconnaissance satellites for espionage. Technology for the launch of artificial satellites for the peaceful exploration of outer space was being misused to prepare the way for a missile defence system, the development of which would constitute a grave challenge to the peaceful exploration of outer space and bring about military confrontation and an arms race in outer space. His delegation therefore supported the draft document on possible elements for a future international legal agreement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects.

26. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea had successfully launched its first artificial satellite in August 1998, marking a new step in the development of independent science and technology for the exploration of outer space. It was proud of that achievement and would make every effort to engage in cooperation and exchanges with other countries in the peaceful uses of outer space.

27. **Mr. Awad** (Egypt) said that his delegation joined others in congratulating China on its first manned space flight. He reiterated his delegation's support for the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, which provided a clear framework for the peaceful use of space technology for the benefit of mankind. The recommendations contained in that Declaration should be implemented by all Member States. He welcomed the continued efforts of COPUOS to reinforce multilateral cooperation for the peaceful exploration of outer space and to provide a legal framework for the use of space technology at the international and regional levels.

28. It was important to make the benefits of space technology more broadly available, in particular for the developing countries; COPUOS must continue its efforts to encourage space-related research in the developing countries and to increase their capacity for adapting space technology for use in areas such as agriculture, industry and health. In that context, he reiterated his delegation's support for the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries. However, he cautioned against the use of concepts or language in United Nations and other forums about which there was not a consensus, for example, the notion of "human security" mentioned in paragraph 36 of draft resolution A/C.4/58/L.7.

29. His delegation was in favour of increasing the number of members of COPUOS. The only criteria for membership should be an ability to be objective and a desire to contribute to the Committee's work. His delegation supported the request of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to become a member of the Committee and urged rapid action on that request, preferably by the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

30. **Mr. Villacís** (Ecuador), after congratulating China on its recent successful space mission, praised the humanistic outlook of COPUOS and its work to ensure that the benefits of space science and technology were used for the greater good of all mankind. He recalled that certain resources, including outer space, could not be owned by particular

individuals or groups, and must be considered as the shared heritage of all mankind. There was a need for legal instruments to ensure that such resources were exploited for the benefit of all, since their improper appropriation or exploitation would have an adverse effect on quality of life and the environment.

31. His delegation supported the recommendations contained in the report of COPUOS (A/58/20). The report should serve as a tool to secure the cooperation of all States in ensuring that space technology was used for the benefit of all the peoples of the planet, especially facing both natural and man-made problems such as extreme poverty, which was caused by unequal distribution of wealth. He welcomed the Committee's decision to include a new agenda item entitled "Space and water" in its agenda, given the close link between water resources and human development.

32. The peaceful use of outer space was of great importance for human development, in particular for the least developed countries, which should have an opportunity to share in the benefits of space exploration and participate in space research. Countries having advanced space technology should share that technology so as to help needy populations through distance education, telemedicine and disaster management. Exchange of information and technology transfer would increase awareness of the benefits of the exploration of outer space and prevent the abuse of space technology, which could lead to the destruction of the entire planet. His delegation was confident the international community would work to ensure that space technology was used to promote economic progress in areas such as agriculture, medical research, security, transportation and environmental and resource management. Greater solidarity and cooperation among nations would contribute to increased standards of living, particularly for the peoples of the developing countries.

33. *The meeting was suspended at 4.20 p.m. and resumed at 5.25 p.m.*

*Draft resolution A/C.4/58/L.7: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space*

34. **Mr. González Aninat** (Chile), introducing draft resolution A/C.4/58/L.7, said that the text was very similar to that of the previous year's resolution, with some exceptions.

35. The last phrase of the eighth preambular paragraph, after the date "1999", had been revised to read: "and the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration". Paragraphs 3 to 9 and 16 to 22 reflected the recommendations of COPUOS concerning the work to be conducted by its two Subcommittees, and paragraphs 10 to 14 reflected the agreement it had reached on the composition of its Bureau and those of its subsidiary bodies. Paragraphs 24 and 25 reflected the success of the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas and the follow-up action taken.

36. Matters relating to the follow-up to UNISPACE III were covered in paragraphs 26 to 31. At the end of paragraph 26, the final phrase "particularly ..." should be revised to read "bearing in mind the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration;".

37. Paragraphs 36 to 39 related to the need to promote the use of space science and technology and their applications in furthering social, economic and cultural development, and the efforts being made in that regard by the United Nations bodies concerned. The text of paragraph 36 should be revised to read:

> "*Notes* that space science and technology and their applications could make important contributions to economic, social and cultural development and welfare as indicated in 'The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development', and *further notes* that the International Fair on Air and Space to be held in Santiago, Chile, in early 2004 will address in an international conference the issue of 'Space and Water towards Sustainable Development and Human Security'".

Paragraph 39 should also be revised; after the words "could contribute to", the rest of the paragraph should be deleted and replaced by: "implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration, particularly in the areas relating to, inter alia, food security and increasing opportunities for education;".

38. Paragraphs 41 to 46 set out the work that COPUOS planned to do in 2004, including the two new items to be included in its agenda. In paragraph 46, the verb "*invites*" should be inserted before the words "other governmental entities".

39. Paragraph 47 should be revised to read:

> "*Welcomes* the continued interest of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to become a member of the Committee and to this end, *requests* that constructive consultations be conducted as soon as possible within the Committee as well as among regional groups, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution, with a view to reaching a positive and final decision on the membership of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the Committee at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly;".

40. There would also be a new paragraph 47 bis, which would read:

> "*Requests* the Committee to consider ways to improve participation by Member States and entities with observer status in its work with a view to agreeing on specific recommendations in that regard at its forty-eighth session;".

41. Finally, paragraph 48 reflected the two recommendations of COPUOS concerning the granting of permanent observer status in COPUOS.

42. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution was not anticipated to have any programme budget implications.

43. *Draft resolution A/C.4/58/L.7, as orally revised, was adopted.*

44. **Mr. González Aninat** (Chile) expressed dissatisfaction that his delegation's proposal to take note with satisfaction of a broadly attended recent conference — as was customary in draft resolutions — had been amended by certain delegations, even though it would in no way have affected the substance of the draft resolution just adopted and would have been a matter of minimal courtesy to his Government.

45. **Ms. Anguiano** (Mexico) said that, even though hers was not the only delegation the representative of Chile had in mind, she had taken note of his dissatisfaction and would convey it to her own Government.

*Draft resolution A/C.4/58/L.8: Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space*

46. **Mr. González Aninat** (Chile) introduced draft resolution A/C.4/58/L.8, which highlighted some of the organizational aspects which would facilitate the preparations for the review. Paragraph 4 should be revised by inserting, at the end, the phrase "or at the highest level possible".

47. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution, was not anticipated to have programme budget implications.

48. *Draft resolution A/C.4/58/L.8, as orally revised, was adopted.*

**Agenda item 84: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories**

49. **Mr. Maitland** (South Africa) observed that the Committee's forthcoming consideration of the item would coincide with that of a similar item by the Third Committee, which had invited the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 to address it on the item. Although there was no precedent for interaction between two Main Committees, he proposed that the Fourth Committee should also invite the Special Rapporteur to speak to it, or else hold a joint meeting with the Third Committee when he addressed it. His delegation believed that such an encounter would enrich the Fourth Committee's discussions and any resolution it adopted under the item in question.

50. **Mr. Assaf** (Lebanon) said that he supported the South African proposal. The Special Rapporteur's presence in the Fourth Committee would be constructive. He proposed that the Bureau should study the matter and decide on the best possible date.

51. **Ms. Price** (Canada) proposed that the Bureau, in considering the South African proposal, should coordinate with the Chairman of the Third Committee so that the two Committees did not consider the related items simultaneously. That would allow those Fourth Committee delegations interested in hearing the

Special Rapporteur's report to the Third Committee to attend that presentation.

52. **Mr. Keiswetter** (United States of America) observed that the United States had had problems with the Third Committee's invitation to the Special Rapporteur, and he suspected that it would object in the Fourth Committee as well. He urged the Bureau to give careful consideration to the matter.

53. **Mr. Blazey** (Australia), supporting the comments of Canada and the United States, asked whether two meetings with the Special Rapporteur were really necessary. Covering the matter in one Committee only should be adequate.

54. **Mr. Hassan** (Jordan) said that the Bureau should give due respect to the views just expressed but also to the relevant, constructive proposal made by South Africa, which his delegation supported.

55. **Ms. Baaziz** (Algeria), **Mr. Fallouh** (Syrian Arab Republic), **Mr. Al-Malki** (Saudi Arabia), **Mr. Yahya** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), **Mr. Molla Hossein** (Islamic Republic of Iran), **Mr. Ramli** (Malaysia), **Mr. Al-Sharafi** (Yemen) and **Mr. Sow** (Senegal) said that they supported the South African proposal.

56. **Mr. Awad** (Egypt) said that the aim of the South African proposal was to revitalize the work of the Committee. For a long time, it had been the practice of Committee members simply to read their statements on the traditional items. The recent dialogue with the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations under agenda item 85 had afforded his delegation one of the most stimulating meetings it had ever attended in the Committee. Similarly, a serious and balanced dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on a question that fell within the Committee's mandate should be of great benefit.

57. **Ms. Offir-Froim** (Israel) observed that the South African proposal would have a negative impact on the work of the Committee.

58. The **Chairman** said that the Bureau would conduct informal consultations on the South African proposal before reporting back to the Committee.

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*